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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0041
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000279

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, D, PRM, NSC FOR
BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2018
TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SE WILLIAMSON TO GHOSH: IMPROVED RELATIONS MEANS
STOPPING JANJAWID VIOLENCE AND INTERFERENCE WITH CHAD

REF: KHARTOUM 266

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons, 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Special Envoy Williamson warned NISS Director Salah Ghosh that while the U.S. is willing to explore options towards improving relations if there is demonstrable change for the better in Darfur, such a possibility could be doomed before it starts if Sudan continues to allow violence by pro-regime Arab militias and doesn't curb its patronage of Chadian rebels seeking to overthrow the Government in Ndjamena. Ghosh focused on Sudan's sincere willingness to improve relations, coupled by skepticism by the regime leadership that the U.S. is sincere, and pleaded for Sudan being removed from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism so that current intelligence cooperation can continue. End summary.

WE'RE RUNNING AFTER YOU

12. (C) Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Director General Salah Ghosh welcomed SE Williamson on February 26 as a sign that the United State is willing to help Sudan solve its problems. "We are running after good relations with the U.S., we cannot rest easy without it and want to repair the relationship". In order to do so, we have to work together on solving those issues of greatest concern to the U.S. - Darfur, CPA implementation and Counter-Terrorism. The NISS is a technical organization, not concerned with politics - neither American nor Sudanese, he continued. "We are far from either American or Sudanese anger or hard speech" but some in the U.S. try to link our intelligence cooperation to political issues. This is wrong because Sudan has committed itself to a professional relationship in this field but some in the U.S. do not want to acknowledge that.

13. (C) On Darfur, Ghosh admitted "we have a major problem" and the regime is both part of the problem and the solution. The U.S. and Sudan both have their visions of what is happening and what needs to be done in Darfur. "We need your help in moving forward," he pleaded. Sudan's politicians have doubts about US Darfur policy, about whether the U.S. really wants to solve it or whether there is a hidden agenda (of regime change) but certainly most other countries will follow the American lead on this matter.

14. (C) The NISS Director remarked that, unlike other countries with humanitarian issues like Liberia or Sierra Leone, "Sudan is strong. We have big problems, we are used to even worse ones when the regime faced wars and enemies on

every side. We do not panic and are dealing with these issues as best we can." The West tried to blame Sudan and pressure it to solve Darfur but the rebels and neighboring countries are also part of the problem. The innocent civilian population pays the price for this strife. "If the U.S. pressured the rebels as much as the Sudanese Government," he opined, the problem of Darfur would be solved quickly. The Sudanese Government can and should be held accountable and will fulfill its commitments. "But the rebels assume the U.S. is on their side and have a vested interest in continuing the struggle."

15. (C) Ghosh said that Sudan does indeed want to see UNAMID deployment but this requires engagement, not just criticism, in order for the deployment to succeed. The media and many in the west seem to blame Sudan for every problem and delay but Sudan is willing to work through all of these issues, as it has been doing. He admitted that the ongoing conflict in Chad has made the situation in Darfur even more complicated. Stability in Chad and stability in Darfur are mutually reinforcing goals and Sudan welcomes American help in calming the situation on both sides of the border. As long as they can fight, the Darfur rebels have no real interest in negotiating, "if we can all stop fighting, at least, this would give politics and peace talks a chance and there could be a comprehensive ceasefire on both sides." Ghosh closed by noting that, except for Abyei, CPA implementation was proceeding "in a reasonable manner" with much implemented but more still to do.

SUDAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DISASTER IS CLEAR

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16. (C) SE Williamson thanked Ghosh for the intelligence cooperation and sharing that has developed, especially for the progress in solving the case of the murdered Embassy employees from USAID. This cooperation is appreciated, not just by the intelligence agencies but also at the political level. The President appreciates this cooperation against our common foe of international terrorism. But even though there is a benefit, there is a real political cost in the U.S. for President Bush because of this cooperation with some in Congress and the private sector criticizing the Administration. The American people, who are so concerned about the suffering in Darfur, don't quite understand it either. There is real value in this cooperation, for both sides, and we should both find ways, out of self-interest, for this collaborative effort to continue.

17. (C) Williamson noted a deep, mature relationship like we would like to see should be based on respect, points of convergence but also on self-interest. President Bush was deeply and personally concerned with Darfur and had been very forward leaning since 2004. "He asked me, why can't we move more quickly to solve" this humanitarian crisis. Sudan is a sovereign state and the U.S. respects that sovereignty and the Sudanese officials. We also realize that while the tripwire for much of the violence had been rebel attacks in 2003, this was followed by great over-reaction by the Sudanese Government and tremendous suffering, but he did not want to re-litigate the past. He wants to see if there can be real progress in Darfur.

18. (C) Sudan was doing some things which make an improvement in relations very difficult and limits what we can do in return, such as talking about the State Sponsors of Terrorism List. The Sudanese Government's arming of the janjawid and the brutal counter-insurgency they unleashed has really complicated the issue and now no one has complete control. He agreed that neighboring countries and rebel movements do need to be pressured. While the U.S. appreciated Sudan's acceptance of UNAMID, more was needed. The UN could have done a better job of coordinating with Sudan but in all

Williamson's decades of work with peacekeeping, "no country had ever created more impediments than Sudan." Some may have been mistakes or poor management but some of it was intentional.

¶9. (C) Williamson remarked that there are now unfortunate consequences of the reality Sudan has created. Militias armed by the regime are now used to operate with impunity. The regime can influence them but not really control all of them. The same confusion now exists with the rebel movements who have fragmented and have their own inertia. Sudan exaggerates our influence with the rebels although we are interested in sending the message to Deby to rein in the JEM rebel movement.

JANJAWID VIOLENCE AND SUPPORT FOR CHADIAN REBELS

¶10. (C) The Special Envoy warned that continued violence by janjawid militias and indiscriminate responses by the Sudanese Government to rebel attacks are hurting innocent civilians and push more people to the rebel side. The NISS has real influence in this field, "you are not just technical people." We strongly condemn this violence and such acts make any possible improvement in relations that much harder, inflames Congress and angers the American people. The regime needs to exercise its considerable remaining influence over its militias and irregular forces to curb violence in Darfur.

¶11. (C) Williamson continued "the NISS is a smart, effective intelligence agency." We know of your role in arming and equipping the Chadian rebels seeking to overthrow President Deby. We will discuss with those countries close to Deby to encourage limitations on the JEM group of Darfuri rebels closest to Chad but at the same time, the Sudanese Government's coordination and support for the Chadian rebels creates problems on both a political and intelligence level. We have to move beyond this and this support should cease. Sudan and the U.S. do distrust each other. The U.S. had made certain offers after the signing of the CPA and DPA accords which were impossible to do because of the violence in Darfur.

¶12. (C) Williamson asked Ghosh to reflect with his political colleagues on the possible benefits and costs of change and of the current reality. What was needed was a way forward with specific measurable steps on both sides but "we cannot ignore the janjawid attacks against civilians and the

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subversion in Chad." JEM also needs to be curbed and unfortunately many, including some in the regime, see the current level of violence as acceptable. It should not be so. What is needed is more stability in Darfur which would allow for greater humanitarian access and safety for civilians. A larger, quicker UNAMID presence, with more boots on the ground is needed. President Bush pledged 100 million dollars to help prepare African troops for effective service in Darfur as soon as possible and that should be followed by Thai and Nepalese units which Sudan should accept.

¶13. (C) SE Williamson added that rebel leaders in Darfur seemed to have no tether to the people, which means that they are not held accountable. One way to constrain them is to engage and strengthen civil society, including IDP leaders. He understands that the regime may be suspicious but such moves would actually weaken the rebels and make the majority of people in Darfur real participants in their future. Right now, the only way to have a say in the region's future is to pick up a gun.

OUT OF THE POLITICAL SHADOWS

¶14. (C) Ghosh responded that professionals on both sides want the intelligence relationship to continue but politicians do

not. There is no real reason for Sudan to still be on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List. Because of this slight, Sudan's leaders have been urging cutting off intelligence cooperation for the past two years. Last December they wanted to cut it off immediately but he had asked the President for one more chance (until late May 2008). If the U.S. waits for "the political mood to be right", this recision will never happen. It is well overdue "to separate this decision from political shadows." He warned that many in the regime believe that the U.S. is not serious about improving relations, and even when they see a non-paper, they think nothing will come of it. "we need to move simultaneously with progress in Darfur coupled by progress in the bilateral relationship," this is the only way for such a process to work because of the lack of trust on both sides. He warned that engaging with civil society and IDPs in Darfur could actually make things worse by creating new rebel groups. Everyone is already so politicized that such well-intentioned foreign initiatives could cause conditions in camps to deteriorate.

¶15. (C) Williamson responded that politics do play a role in decisions such as the State Sponsors of Terrorism List and it is inconceivable that there could be any progress on such an issue without real, tangible political and humanitarian progress in Darfur. He added that after 5 years of suffering, now is the time to solve this issue. While a total solution may be difficult, much can be done to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground. We need to improve humanitarian access and tamp down the negative effect of rebels and bandits that prey on Sudan's misery. He closed by thanking Ghosh for Sudan's help on terrorism issues but focused, once again, on janjawid depredations and Sudan's support for Chadian rebels as negative factors that could block any possibility of an improved relationship.

¶16. (C) Comment: Sudan's spymaster is a professional officer who is both a sincere partisan of better relationship with the U.S. and also the regime's "can-do" guy on the dirty business of Arab militias and on liaison with Chadian rebels. Ghosh certainly heard the message of deep concern about janjawid violence and subversion in Chad loud and clear. Despite his false humility, he is at the heart of Sudan's internal dilemma; which is more important, an improved relationship with the West tied to real change in behavior by Khartoum or a rogue existence based on murder and mayhem? Sudan's track record does not fill one with confidence but if indeed we care about the poor humanitarian situation in Darfur, there is no substitute to retaining that skepticism, engaging cautiously and carefully monitoring what, if anything, the Khartoum regime is willing or able to deliver to improve a dire situation it bears most of the responsibility in creating. End comment.

¶17. (U) SE Williamson did not have a chance to clear this cable.

FERNANDEZ